



Applicants Guide to Submitting **VARIANCE APPLICATIONS**

PURPOSE:

The Zoning Ordinance establishes specific criteria which govern development throughout the City. These criteria are referred to as **development standards**, and address areas such as site area, building site coverage, building height, building setbacks and landscape setbacks. Occasionally, the strict application of these standards may be inappropriate because of special circumstances which are applicable to a particular site. When this is the case, the property owner may request that the Planning Commission grant a Variance for their proposed property improvements.

Some examples of special or unique circumstances are an oddly configured lot, limited access to a site and unique site topography. The Zoning Ordinance does not allow for consideration of a Variance based upon financial considerations or other extraneous concerns. The Zoning Ordinance requires the Planning Commission make two specific findings prior to approving a Variance. They are as follows:

1. **Special Circumstances:** There are special circumstances applicable to the subject building site which, when applicable zoning regulations are strictly applied, deprive the subject building site of privileges enjoyed by other property in the vicinity and subject to the same zoning regulations.
2. **No Special Privileges:** Approval of the application will not constitute a grant of special privileges which are inconsistent with the limitations placed upon other properties in the vicinity and subject to the same zoning regulations, when specified conditions are complied with.

It is imperative that the applicant provide written justification indicating how the project or request will meet the above findings. Variance applications are subject to the review and approval of the City's Planning Commission. A Planning Commission action on a Variance may be appealed to the City Council.

Variance applications may be submitted to the Development Services Department Monday through Thursday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. and every other Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (Closed for lunch 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.)

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS:

The following information is required upon submittal:

1. Completed Variance application.
2. Case deposit of \$6,000.00 made payable to the **City of Lake Forest** (per City Council Resolution). *A Fee of \$372.00 is required for applications which require review by the OCFA. This will need to be a **separate check** made payable to the **Orange County Fire Authority**. A check payable to the County Clerk, in the amount of \$50.00 may be required for the County administrative filing fee, to enable the City to file the Notice of Determination required under Public Resources Code Section 21152 and 14 Cal. Code of Regulations 15075.
3. One (1) set of architectural plans reduced to 8 1/2" x 11".
4. Ownership list, map, and stamped envelopes.
 - a. One (1) set of self-addressed, stamped (not metered) envelopes of property owners located within a 300-foot radius of the project site and one (1) typed list of all property owners. Include following return address: Planning Division, City of Lake Forest, 25550 Commercentre Dr., Suite 100, Lake Forest, CA 92630.
 - b. One copy of the Assessor's parcel map(s), indicating the three hundred (300) foot radius line and the applicant's property.
5. Letter of justification, explaining in detail the specifics of the Variance request and identifying how the Variance will meet the required findings of "special circumstances" and "no special privileges."
6. Ten (10) sets of architectural plans, including a site plan, and containing the following information (folded to a size of 8 1/2" x 11"):
 - a. Vicinity Map.
 - b. Title block (name and address of property owner and/or applicant).
 - c. Scale and North arrow.
 - d. Date plans prepared.
 - e. Identification of all property lines and dimensions of building site.

* If Applicable

- *f. Ultimate street right-of-way lines, including existing striping on adjacent streets and existing and proposed accessways from streets. Plans should also include street locations, names, widths and existing improvements such as sidewalks.
 - *g. Location of all existing easements, dimensions and purpose of easements.
 - *h. Location of all existing and proposed walls and fences, including height, type and materials.
 - *i. Existing and proposed grades and topography of site.
 - *j. Location of all existing and proposed buildings, including building square footage and setbacks from property lines.
 - *k. Parking layout, indicating typical stall size, whether continuous curbs or wheel blocks are used, and a tabulation of all required and proposed on-site parking.
 - *l. Location of all signs, including sign type, height, dimensions, copy, color, and type of illumination.
 - *m. Location of all trash and storage areas and method of screening.
 - *n. Location of all mechanical equipment and method of screening.
 - *7. Any other plans or materials determined necessary by Development Services staff to enable the complete review of the Variance request such as Building Elevations or a Landscape Plan.
 - *8. Homeowner or Business Association approval.
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